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**Illinois Library
Association**

Press Release

The Booth Library at Eastern Illinois University is the recipient of the 2014 Illinois Library Association Demco Library Innovative Award.

This award recognizes a library's achievement in planning and implementing an innovative or creative program or service which has had a measurable impact on its users. The award is sponsored by Demco.

Using the model of inclusivity, the Booth Library developed a creative series of programs that expanded the reach of a national grant far beyond the walls of the library. "America's Music: A Film History of Our Popular Music from Blues to Bluegrass to Broadway," funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, American Library Association, and Tribeca Film Institute supported a film series focusing on varied genres. However, Library staff saw the opportunity to both educate and entertain the larger area community through a wide variety of unique programming offered both on the EIU campus and in six communities in the region.

The grant provided a major outreach opportunity for Booth Library to unite six regional public library audiences with students, faculty, and other community members interested in exploring American music, history, and culture. The participating public libraries were in the communities of Danville, Decatur, Robinson, Shelbyville, Paris, and Marshall.

The "America's Music" series creatively engaged members of the library's targeted audience to directly participate in programming rather than simply being observers. More than 20 amateur and professional musicians from the community performed. Nearly 30 EIU faculty members also performed, gave lectures and led discussions. In addition, almost 80 EIU students shared their talents by talking about their research; curating exhibits; playing, singing and dancing to blues, gospel, Broadway and jazz music; and producing the

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opening and closing programs. Finally, an overnight mini-camp brought nine talented vocalists from area high schools to campus to learn, rehearse and perform three Broadway numbers in the closing concert.

In a letter of support, Nancy K. Claypool, library director of the Marshall Public Library said "The Marshall community is rural and low-income...When free events such as these occur in the community, it is often the only opportunity to see and learn about things other than the life they know here...This program broke down the barriers, for one terrific evening, that so many people encounter on an everyday basis."

The program allowed the Library to promote the humanities in the region and enrich rural and small-town life. As noted in the nomination: "With so many rural areas left with meager or no school programs in art, music and film, this program allowed us to stimulate both students and adults to recognize the benefits of education in the arts and humanities."

The Demco Library Innovative Award will be presented at the Illinois Library Association Annual Conference Awards Luncheon on Tuesday, October 14 at 12:00 p.m. at the Prairie Capital Convention Center in Springfield, Illinois.

For further information, contact the Illinois Library Association.